

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Journal

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A Letter to Readers

I am extremely grateful to the dedicated men and women of our agency for their professional contribution to the safety of California's motorists. The departments within the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency comprise the Governor's principal transportation regulatory and enforcement organizations. By combining their resources, we are making driving safer, as evidenced by the fact that the number of fatalities per miles traveled is now the lowest in the state's history.

As Secretary for Transportation, I am committed to having the best traffic safety programs possible, including anti-DUI, bicycle and pedestrian safety, occupant protection, police traffic services, roadway safety and emergency medical services. These programs and so many others are helping California achieve its traffic safety successes, such as having the highest seat belt compliance rate in the nation.



Maria
Contreras-Sweet

I have a charge from Governor Gray Davis to improve safety on California's roadways. That means relieving traffic congestion, thus affording people more quality time for work and family life. We all enjoy getting home quickly and safely after a hard day's work.

One of our shared goals is to alleviate traffic congestion by stopping unsafe driving behaviors that contribute to accidents. Through funding for more law enforcement personnel and equip-

ment, emergency response vehicles and public education, we will make our roads even safer. We are also excited about the new partnerships being established with community-based organizations in California. This innovation will expand our outreach enormously. The Governor recently awarded \$11.8 million to local community-based organizations to promote traffic safety programs.

Traffic safety is everyone's business. Governor Davis and I look forward to working with all of you to improve the quality of life for all Californians.

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Maria Contreras-Sweet".

Maria Contreras-Sweet

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It's probably not the last piece of the Los Angeles Basin's transit puzzle, but it certainly is a big one that is already having a strong positive effect on the cityscape of California's largest urban agglomeration.

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Agency's new Red Line, operating since June 24 of this year, has had a galvanizing effect on the other elements of the city's public transportation system, causing impressive ridership gains on connecting buses, the existing subway, and Metrolink.

The new \$4.7 billion project was financed partly by more than \$550 million from the State Transportation Improvement Program, plus other State-administered federal funds of almost \$240 million, bringing the Caltrans-assisted financing to almost \$800 million.

More importantly, the opening of the Red Line represents the culmination of a 20-year partnership between Caltrans and the Metropolitan Transit Authority that lasted through a disastrous methane gas explosion, a decision to reroute a major portion of the line in downtown Los Angeles, a \$115 million shortfall, and calls to end the project. When revenues began to fall short during the recession of the early 1990s, Caltrans worked out an arrangement allowing the district to use State funds to continue building as it searched for other financing.

And while Caltrans did not have a formal role in construction oversight, Caltrans' Linda Wright often found herself slogging through unbraced mud tunnels to assure that the progress pay work for which the district was being reimbursed was being done.

Through it all, from preliminary engineering and design through opening day, Caltrans worked with the district to keep the money flowing and to support the project against those hoping for its demise.

The 28 km (17.4 mile) Red Line operates between Union Station in downtown Los Angeles, and North Hollywood. Over its length, the line serves 16 stations between Union Station and North Hollywood. Each of the stations has an

individual design and specially commissioned artwork integrated into its structure and streetscape above, often reflecting the history and character of the surrounding neighborhood with entertaining and whimsical features that make many stations worth a tourist's visit on their own merits.

In a city famed for its fealty to the automobile, the line's ridership has astonished everybody. Within two weeks of the opening of the North Hollywood extension, average daily boardings on the Red Line subway system jumped 89%, from 64,190 to 121,477. Daily ridership on the entire Metro rail system (Red, Blue and Green Lines) increased to 211,015, 42% over the May ridership of 149,050 boardings. This is largely due to the increased connectivity provided by the link to the San Fernando Valley and the success of MTA's newly inaugurated Rapid Bus lines along Ventura Boulevard and Wilshire/

PUTTING THE

Whittier Boulevard. These corridors feed into the Universal City and Wilshire Boulevard stations from the Valley, Wilshire district and East Los Angeles. Red Line ridership has already reached levels MTA had predicted for one year after the final segment's opening.

But the line is beginning to show other cityscape benefits as well. All three Hollywood stations are centers of major redevelopment efforts and economic improvement projects, both public and private, as part of the ongoing "Hollywood Renaissance." A number of joint development projects tied with financial district revitalization, including the Amundson tower and the rehabilitation of the Pantages Theater at Hollywood and Vine are improving the quality of urban life around them.

Linda Wright: "The State has been vindicated in its support of this system. It is now paying off. The light and heavy rail and feeder bus systems are booming. And people who are transit dependent are able to take trips they were never able to take before. That's a real improvement in mobility.

"The partnership that we have developed with the Metropolitan Transit Agency has been tested and found to be a very strong one. As Los Angeles continues to develop its system, we will be there with them."

Federal Transportation Agency
Secretary Rodney Slater joined
Caltrans Director Jeff Morales and
Business, Transportation and Housing
Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet in
celebrating the Red Line opening.



RED LINE IN THE BLACK





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Governor of California

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Transportation and Housing Agency

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Department of Transportation (Caltrans)